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# SAMOA: ISLANDS OF CONFLICT

by

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with the aid of the Research Staff of the Foreign Policy Association

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## INTRODUCTION

THE government of politically dependent and "native" peoples is becoming increasingly difficult, not only in large territories like the Netherlands East Indies, French Indo-China and the Philippines, but even in the smallest islands. Perhaps no better illustration of the forces which create unrest in the colonial world can be found than the situation in the Samoan islands, far out in the central Pacific ocean.

Samoa is divided today into two political areas. The largest and most populous islands, Savai'i and Upolu, were formerly German Samoa, and are now administered by New Zealand under mandate from the League of Nations. Tutuila island, with three small islands collectively called Manu'a, and an uninhabited atoll, Rose island, form a United States possession. A comparative idea of the two countries may be gained from the following statistical summary:<sup>1</sup>

	Western Samoa	American Samoa
Approximate area (square miles) .....	1,102	73
Total Population, 1930 .....	44,571	10,055
Samoans, and a few other Polynesians .....	40,722	8,926
Part-Samoans (in Western Samoa those distinguished from Samoans as having the same legal status as whites) .....	2,320	877
Whites (including in American Samoa the naval personnel of 179) .....	425	227
Chinese (in Western Samoa mainly contract laborers with limited residence) .....	959	5
Melanesians (laborers remaining from German days) .....	145	—
Negroes, Japanese and others .....	—	20
Total Trade, 1930, approximately .....	\$2,730,000	\$293,749

Comparatively insignificant as the islands are in size and population, they have for

nearly a century been a trouble spot in the Pacific area. The early white settlers found them torn by native factionalism and warfare. Having harbors suitable for ocean-going vessels, they became the object of rivalries among the major powers during the nineteenth century. In recent years the United States, German and New Zealand authorities administering their affairs have encountered difficulties and conflicts in dealing not only with the native Samoans but also with the resident white and part-Samoan population. Well-organized movements in opposition to the government exist today in both Western and American Samoa. These *Mau* or "Opinion" movements demand a change in the existing political order, a greater influence in administration, and redress for alleged wrongs.

## EARLY HISTORY OF THE ISLANDS

Following the early discoverers—whalers, traders, escaped convicts and missionaries—came warships and consuls of the three powers most interested in the islands: Great Britain, the United States and Germany. Unanimous in supporting an independent native kingdom—for each refused to have the other annex the group—they nevertheless differed almost constantly in their choice of a Samoan "king." This gave the Samoan chiefs and people a new and exciting outlet for their age-old games of family rivalry, political intrigue and warfare. No five-year period from 1840 to 1900 was without some major disturbance.

The pen of Robert Louis Stevenson has supplemented the historical documents in describing the stormy days of the tripartite

1. The figures of area are approximate, as authorities vary considerably in their estimates. Those of population are accurate in the case of American Samoa, as based on a census of 1930; Western Samoa has had no census since 1926, and so the figures are based on official estimates. The native Samoans are Polynesians, being one of the largest sections of the brown-skinned people who occupy the oceanic triangle between Hawaii, Easter Island and New Zealand.

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régime in Samoa.<sup>2</sup> In 1879 an international concession area was formed around the main port, Apia, where whites could enjoy extraterritorial privileges. From then on, except for one short period, this "Municipality" functioned side by side with a native Samoan government—or several such—the whole under joint supervision by the powers concerned. This system, however, proved a hopeless failure in spite of numerous international consultations and agreements.

In 1900 Great Britain withdrew in favor of other imperial concessions, leaving Germany and the United States to divide the group. Germany took the largest and richest islands, where its nationals acquired a considerable economic stake and, incidentally, where political disturbances were centered. The United States secured control of only a fraction of the land and people, but obtained the splendid harbor of Pago Pago (pronounced Pango Pango) on which was established the Tutuila naval station.<sup>3</sup>

After 1900 civil authorities in German Samoa and the naval authorities in American Samoa set up administrative systems that were remarkably successful. The results appeared almost miraculous to those familiar with the instability of earlier days. True, American control was made effective only by bringing pressure to bear on both the Samoan leaders and the local whites in Tutuila, and the head chief of the Manu'a islands, called the Tuimana'a, refused to submit for four years.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, the Germans had a delicate task in getting the proud and turbulent chiefs to acknowledge the overlordship of the Kaiser, and the polyglot non-native community of Apia to accept abolition of the Municipality. During the fourteen years of their rule two serious native outbreaks occurred—in 1904-1905 and 1909. On the latter occasion a native movement opposing the government, called a *Mau*, emerged in Savai'i island, and grave trouble was averted only by the arrival of German warships summoned from the China station.<sup>5</sup> In 1914, at the request of Great Britain, an armed force from New Zealand occupied

2. Robert Louis Stevenson, *A Footnote to History*, and *Vailima Letters*. A full and impartial history of Samoa in the nineteenth century remains to be written. The British point of view is given in G. H. Scholefield, *The Pacific, Its Past and Future* (London, 1920). The documents on the American side, together with much other relevant material, are presented in G. H. Ryden, *The Foreign Policy of the United States in Relation to Samoa* (New Haven, 1933). These refer in bibliographies to the primary sources.

3. The right of the United States to establish a coaling station there was obtained from the Samoan government by a treaty of 1878 (cf. Ryden, *The Foreign Policy of the United States in Relation to Samoa*, chap. VII). Land was acquired early in the nineties, and the first materials sent in 1899.

4. Facts shown in the early manuscript reports of the naval Governors and the secretary of native affairs (seen at Pago Pago), but now more or less forgotten; cf. F. M. Keesing, *Modern Samoa*, pp. 128-31, 199-203.

5. The history of this period, gathered from contemporary records in the government files at Apia, is summarized in Keesing, *Modern Samoa*, pp. 75-95.

German Samoa, and a military régime was instituted which lasted until the establishment of civil government in 1920.

The post-war years were marked by unrest in both Samoas. American Samoa was in an indeterminate political position, as Congress had failed to ratify deeds of cession sent by the Samoan chiefs and accepted by the President. The islands were consequently ruled by the successive naval commanders under direct mandate from the President.<sup>6</sup> The autocratic powers centered in such naval representatives, as well as some of the policies they initiated, became objects of criticism by whites and part-Samoans. In April 1920 charges of financial mismanagement were made by two subordinate naval officers and a civilian American married into an influential part-Samoan family. The Samoan leaders in Tutuila took up the matter, forming a *Mau* organization that staged demonstrations and demanded redress. As serious trouble threatened, a naval commission proceeded to the islands. Before its arrival the naval commandant committed suicide. The commission ordered a court-martial of the two naval officers concerned, and deported the civilian. With some difficulty the "rebellious" chiefs were persuaded to reaffirm their loyalty.<sup>7</sup>

But the trouble was not over. In spite of a modified form of martial law and strict control of travel and mails, the disaffection and "intrigue" continued. In 1921 Mr. S. S. Ripley, a part-Samoan relative of the deported civilian, was prohibited from landing in Samoa. This was made the basis of a long-drawn court case<sup>8</sup> which ended only in 1927, when the complaint lapsed in the United States Court of Appeals. Samoan sympathizers furnished funds for the litigation and followed it with interest. In 1921, too, seventeen native chiefs and orators were apprehended and found guilty of conspiracy to start an insurrection and kill chiefs who supported the government. They were imprisoned until a pardon was granted in 1924.<sup>9</sup>

#### THE MAU MOVEMENT

The *Mau* movement did not succumb to suppression. Realizing, however, that physical resistance to authority was impossible, it confined its activities to meetings and verbal criticism. So long as no breach of the peace occurred, the naval officials found it politic not to interfere. In 1927 they even allowed the organization to come into the open; when a clubhouse was built at the headquarters

6. *American Samoa, A General Report by the Governor* (Washington, 1927), parts III, IV.

7. *Idem*, p. 58; *American Samoa, Hearings before the Commission . . . 1930* (Washington, 1931), pp. 351-55.

8. *Ripley vs. Captain Evans*, the naval Governor at the time.

9. *American Samoa, Hearings . . . 1930*, p. 285; the best sources relating to these events, the contemporary official reports, exist only in typescript form in the files at Washington and Pago Pago.

village, Nu'uuli, the Governor himself attended and presented an American flag. Since that time the anti-naval propaganda of the organization has continued. When in 1930 the Congressional Commission visited the islands, the *Mau* spokesman led the attack on the administration, and the voice of the organization, together with that of white and part-Samoan supporters in Samoa, Hawaii, and on the American mainland, continued to make itself heard.

The *Mau*, however, has never succeeded in getting much support from the people of the Manu'a islands. The latter are more isolated and have relatively little contact with white people and modern life as compared with the Tutuilans. The Manu'ans heartily supported the naval rule before the 1930 Commission.

The main objectives of the American Samoa *Mau* in recent years have been, first, to oust the Navy from control over their affairs and, second, to obtain American citizenship. These objectives coincide with the ideas of non-native critics of the administration in Samoa and outside. From 1926 on the indeterminate status of the territory was brought to the notice of Congress. At last, in 1929, the long-shelved deeds of cession were ratified, and in the following year a Congressional Commission visited the islands to investigate conditions at first hand. The evidence collected in its *Hearings* showed that both Samoans and non-Samoans were equally divided in demanding continuance of Naval rule and establishment of a civil régime. The Commission favored the latter course. Its recommendations,<sup>10</sup> approved by the United States Senate, were held up, however, in the House of Representatives; after further committee hearings this body rejected them in February 1933.<sup>11</sup> Naval rule consequently continues, although modified somewhat in accordance with such recommendations of the Commission as separation of executive from judicial powers, hitherto vested in one person who acted as secretary of native affairs and judge, and promulgation of a Bill of Rights. Nor has the anti-naval agitation shown any signs of slackening.

The year 1920, crucial in the history of American Samoa, was marked also by trouble and opposition in Western Samoa. A "Citizens' Committee" nominated by the resident whites and by part-Samoans of standing in the Apia community presented "reports" to the New Zealand authorities criticizing a Constitution Order on which civil government was to be based, and enumerating current grievances.<sup>12</sup> The New Zealand govern-

ment, eager to establish a model dependency in which the interest of the Samoans should be the primary consideration, took little note of these complaints. Meanwhile the Samoans, suspicious of a fall in prices resulting from the post-war slump, instituted a boycott of all trading stores which lasted for some months. Conditions remained disturbed through 1921-1922. Further meetings of non-natives took place, and native petitions complaining against New Zealand's rule were formulated.<sup>13</sup>

In 1923 the administrative system was modified to give both non-natives and natives a greater voice in the government. A number of economic and educational measures were inaugurated. For a time it seemed that the difficulties of the mandatory power were over. Yet in 1926 a storm of criticism burst once more. Public meetings were held, and another citizens' committee prepared reports on current grievances.<sup>14</sup> The leading spirit of this movement was a merchant of part-Samoan ancestry, Mr. O. F. Nelson, who was also an elected member of the legislative council.<sup>15</sup> But where in German and earlier New Zealand days such critics had never openly drawn the native Samoans to side with them against the government, this time they invited Samoans to attend the meetings, form committees and formulate written grievances. To the authorities this action was unpardonable, especially as, with amazing rapidity, a *Mau* of Western Samoa came into being throughout the mandated territory. Before long the movement commanded the loyalty of perhaps 90 per cent of the native population. After unsuccessful attempts to deal with the situation by conferring with both non-native and Samoan leaders and disciplining the latter, the government adopted the forcible step of deporting three members of the non-native community who were heading the anti-government campaign, including Mr. Nelson.

From this time on the movement had two centres. In Samoa the *Mau* adherents set up a government of their own, gathered in council, paraded, feasted, repudiated taxes and official regulations, instituted boycotts and non-cooperation and enjoyed the experience of more or less completely paralyzing the processes of administration. From New Zealand the exiles directed the movement on its verbal side by circulating petitions and formulating *Mau* policies. They also launched

12. These were published in pamphlet form under the title *Samoan's Problems* (Apia, 1920).

13. New Zealand Parliamentary Paper, *Visit by the Minister of External Affairs to Samoa, 1922*; report of meeting of citizens, *Samoan Times*, February 17, 1922.

14. New Zealand Parliamentary Papers, *Visit by the Minister of External Affairs, 1927*; *Report of Royal Commission on Western Samoa, 1928*.

15. The Germans had an advisory council of officials and of citizens nominated by the Governor. New Zealand transformed it into a legislative council, comprised of the leading officials with a minority of elected citizens.

10. *Report of the Commission . . .* (Washington, 1931).

11. United Press report, February 24, 1933. The bill was defeated by 72 votes to 26.

a remarkable campaign of propaganda on a virtually world-wide scale to undermine New Zealand's prestige and position as mandatory.

Late in 1929 came the first crisis. A clash occurred between Samoan demonstrators and a white constabulary force, in which blood was shed on both sides. The *Mau* men fled to the hills. Warships hastened from New Zealand, and landing parties hunted the wanted men. In March 1930 a truce was arranged. The *Mau* followers dispersed to their homes, although maintaining their stand of non-cooperation. A system of modified martial law was established in certain districts where *Mau* leaders and loyalties were strongest, and this measure has hitherto sufficed to maintain external peace and order. Yet the movement has continued in existence, and perhaps a majority of Samoans are still little responsive to government approaches. A women's *Mau*, formed in 1930, has been allowed to meet and demonstrate in public without official interference.<sup>16</sup>

The year 1933 witnessed another crisis in the conflict. In May the deported Mr. Nelson, after trying in vain to obtain guarantees

of political immunity from the New Zealand government, returned to the islands, his banishment having ended some months before. He was met with elaborate demonstrations of welcome by *Mau* adherents. From June to August the authorities held a number of conferences with the *Mau* leaders in an effort to renew negotiations for a settlement. At each meeting, however, the *Mau* representatives requested that Mr. Nelson be permitted to attend. This was refused, and the meetings were finally discontinued without producing any results.<sup>17</sup> Mr. Nelson holds the key to the present situation. If he submits to the government by renouncing political activities, his almost godlike prestige among *Mau* supporters may wane, and the movement may correspondingly dwindle. If he encourages them, or takes part in them as he apparently has already done, he is likely to be banished once more. In this case demonstrations may be staged by his Samoan supporters, with the possibility that blood may flow again. The situation has thus reached a delicate and dangerous stage for the New Zealand authorities.

### CAUSES OF SAMOAN UNREST

Why all this trouble in little Samoa? Some have attributed it since early days to the "natural turbulence of the Samoans," with their traditional feuds and their love of intrigue. Nevertheless, in recent years, the governing authorities in both Samoas have declared that the Samoans would be content enough if it were not for the machinations of "scheming traders," "discontented beachcombers" and "power-seeking half-castes" who "manipulate the native as a means of gaining their own selfish ends." As against this, the white and part-Samoan critics of the government have vehemently asserted that the fault lies with "an autocratic and militaristic officialdom" who disregard the legitimate interests of non-native residents, and have no understanding of the native, force changes upon him, and thwart his urgent desire for self-government.

The unbiassed observer finds that the following elements of the Samoan situation are

16. A good summary of events from 1926 to 1929 is found in A. J. Toynbee, *Survey of International Affairs* (London, 1930), pp. 373-404, also in J. B. Condliffe, *New Zealand in the Making* (Chicago, 1930), pp. 404-21. The partisan literature is voluminous. Besides a propagandist paper, *The New Zealand Samoa Guardian* (Auckland, 1929—), devoted to attacking the New Zealand government and the Mandates Commission, the following examples of anti-administration publications may be cited: O. F. Nelson, *The Truth About Samoa* (Auckland, 1928) and *Samoa at Geneva* (London, 1928); "Memorandum on the Samoan Unrest," by a group of New Zealand educators, in *New Zealand National Review*, April 15, 1930; N. A. Rowe, *Samoa Under the Sailing Gods* (London, 1930). For the official point of view, cf. A. B. Chappell, *The Stir in Samoa* (Auckland, 1928); *Report of Royal Commission*, cited, 1928. The analysis of the situation before the Permanent Mandates Commission is found in the *Minutes* of that body relating to Samoa each year from 1927, especially session XIII, 1928.

17. *New Zealand Herald*, August 23, 1933; *Pacific Islands Monthly* (a useful journal of the islands published in Sydney), August 22, 1933, pp. 6, 10.

particularly important: (1) the life and thought of the native Samoan are undergoing extensive change and considerable disorganization; (2) the ancient Samoan polity has not proved readily adaptable to Western forms and philosophies of government; (3) official policies, even though applied with the best of intentions, have in some instances been far from wise or at least expedient, and have been based on inadequate knowledge; (4) from earliest days there has been a conflict between the aims of governing authorities and the private interests and personal aspirations of resident whites; and (5) an ever-increasing group of mixed-blood people are thrown into a difficult position by legal enactments, and by social and economic circumstances, with resulting unrest. Each of these factors must be briefly examined here.

The coming of the trader and the missionary to Samoa brought profound changes. The conservative life of today, as described for example in Miss Mead's *Coming of Age in Samoa*,<sup>18</sup> is not the old Samoan system, but that system considerably reorganized and somewhat disintegrated by Western influences. Most of the early modifications in customs and ideas occurred through ready acceptance by the Samoans of the new things as better than their own. But as control by outside authority has tightened and native life has been subjected to alien-made regulations, many changes have been effected only by compulsion. Thus the chiefs

18. M. Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa* (New York, 1928).

have had to surrender their right to coerce or kill their followers, leaving social discipline to courts and judges. Not only were old ways suppressed, but new and foreign ones were introduced: health measures, tax-paying, registering of the titles of chiefs, and numerous similar regulations. The result is seen today in a sense of pressure, not a little bewilderment and, among the more conservative natives, considerable resentment. This is less marked in American Samoa, although indeed from 1900 on the naval authorities introduced a far more drastic curtailment of Samoan customs than the Germans.<sup>19</sup> After a first period of enforcement, however, the tendency in the American territory has been not to interfere with Samoan life except where vital matters such as health are concerned. Since 1924, on the contrary, the New Zealand authorities in the mandated territory have launched a determined effort to re-mold Samoan ways along lines they consider desirable. The resulting pressure on the population has been a leading factor in producing the *Mau* reaction and non-cooperation since 1927.<sup>20</sup>

Furthermore, as travel and contact with the outside world opened to the Samoan the possibility of experiences hitherto undreamed of, a widening breach has appeared between those wishing to keep to old ways and those disregarding them in favor of new customs. This process has been especially marked since government schooling, introduced in recent years, has supplemented the more conservative mission education. Many younger people are now turning from the Samoan customs, and disputing the authority of the older generation and the ancient sanctions. Seen most clearly in Upolu and Tutuila, especially around the ports of Apia and Pago Pago, this disorganization of native life is beginning to appear even in the remotest communities. This is the result of a decade of emphasis on Americanization in the schools and of influences for change coming from the naval station.

Unfortunately it is difficult for the Samoan adequately to learn the ways of an alien culture. These ways come to such isolated islands in fragmentary form, variously demonstrated, as by missionaries, traders, sailors, officials and tourists. Any smattering of school knowledge is highly artificial. The old decays, with nothing satisfactory to take its place, and instability and maladjustment are consequently produced.

Such conditions of pressure, bewilderment, resentment, cultural disorganization and mal-

19. *Codification of the Regulations and Orders, American Samoa* (Washington, 1931).

20. The new regulations are given in the Samoan language in two pamphlets called *Tulafono mo Samoa i Sisifo* (Malua [Samoa], 1924, 1926); cf. also evidence before the Royal Commission of 1927, cited, and Keesing, *Modern Samoa*, cited, chap. III-VI.

adjustment have provided in Samoa, as elsewhere, a fertile soil for the development of reactionary, mystical and political movements based on mass emotion which give a sense of unity, satisfaction, and escape from difficult circumstances. Of these, the *Mau* organizations are the outstanding examples. In broad terms they are the result of what might be termed "cultural-pathological" conditions in Samoan life. Seen in this light, their sudden spread, the degree of zeal and unanimity shown among their adherents, and their tenacity can be readily understood.

#### SAMOA'S POLITICAL SYSTEM

Modern changes have been especially drastic from the political point of view. The old Samoa comprised some hundreds of autonomous communities, linked into larger federations by ties of kinship and common needs for defence. While regional fights were frequent, the major wars and intrigues took place between two factions that included all Samoa except the isolated Manu'a islands. On one side were aligned east and west Upolu, with Tutuila as a subsidiary of the former. They sought to control the whole group on behalf of a family known as the *Tupua*, and their representative council of orators, a very complex institution, was known as *Tumua*—"The First." On the other side was central Upolu, together with nearly all Savai'i, supporting a family called the *Malietoa* and having an orator council known as *Pule*—"The Authority."<sup>21</sup> The *Tupua* family had long been dominant prior to the coming of white settlers. In 1830, the date when written Samoan history opens, the *Malietoa* faction emerged victorious after years of warfare. Its highest chief, *Malietoa Vaiinup*, was treated by the white missionaries, captains of war vessels and others as if he were a king.

The troubled decades of Samoan history to 1900 must be seen not only as a time of rivalry between the major powers, but also as marked by a continued struggle between the *Tumua* and *Pule*, and between *Tupua* and *Malietoa* candidates for supremacy and for this kingly honor. In general, Great Britain and the United States sided with the *Malietoa*, and Germany with the *Tupua*. Every time the chief of one or the other party occupying the "throne" died, weakened, became unpopular, or was removed because he incurred the displeasure of one or more of the powers, all the jealousy and disruption inherent in native politics came into the open,

21. This simplified statement of the old Samoan polity could be filled out by reference to R. W. Williamson, *The Social and Political Systems of Central Polynesia* (3 vols., Cambridge University Press, 1924), where the evidence of all earlier students is brought together. Its significance for modern Samoan politics is analyzed in Keesing, *Modern Samoa*, cited, pp. 48-94. The orators (*tulafale*) were a class in Samoan society distinct from chiefs (*ali'i*), being persons speaking for the latter and conducting, or more often dominating, their affairs.

rarely without warfare. Similarly various kinds of parliaments, ministries, and courts of law fashioned by white advisers for the government of the "independent" Samoan kingdom<sup>22</sup> provided a new stage on which the old native political game could be carried on more vigorously than ever. As the overlord nations would not countenance the earlier Samoan method of resolving differences—fighting to a finish, and impoverishing the vanquished by destruction of property and periodic exactions—disturbance succeeded disturbance.

After 1900 Germany performed a series of drastic operations on the Samoan body politic as the only way to insure peace and order. The modern kingship, and the highest chieftain titles of the old Samoa out of which it grew, were abolished; the orator councils of *Tumua* and *Pule* and the parliaments of the international days were declared null and void; and the whole upper structure of the native ceremonial life was officially wiped out. In their place was grafted a system of paid native officials, central and local, responsible to the German Governor—although naturally the individuals nominated to these posts were men of the highest rank in Samoan society. A special effort was made to break the power of the native orators and their councils by placing the new authority primarily into the hands of chiefs.<sup>23</sup> The outbreaks of the German period were essentially attempts to restore the old Samoan leadership thus superseded, as well as the ancient order generally. The severity of the punishment meted out by the authorities each time—banishments from Samoa, imprisonments, removal of native titles, and fines—was justified in German opinion by the dangers of unleashing once more the forces of Samoan factionalism.

#### NEW ZEALAND ADMINISTRATION

New Zealand took over the German system of native administration with little amendment. The new officials were apparently hardly conscious of the socio-political wound yet unhealed. But with the change from military to civil government in 1920, and the beginning of New Zealand's attempt to place some of the responsibility of administration in the hands of native leaders, came the first difficulty: the native leaders began to agitate for a greater influence, and resentment was expressed against

22. As the well-known *Ta'imua* and *Faipule*. Unfortunately the current histories of Samoa, as for instance Ryden, *The Foreign Policy of the United States in Relation to Samoa*, cited, use terms such as *Tumua* and *Pule*, *Ta'imua* and *Faipule*, and refer to Samoan leaders and families without any explanation of their real significance in terms of native organization. The writer has sought to supply this in the work referred to.

23. Apart from certain official records preserved at Apia, the best source of information on German native policy is the contemporary newspaper in German and English, the *Samoanische Zeitung* (Apia, 1900-1914); cf. especially June 22, 1901, August 19, 1905, May 15, 1909.

"oppressive" regulations.<sup>24</sup> Had it not been that in 1918 Western Samoa was swept severely by the world-wide influenza epidemic, during which great numbers of the older chiefs and orators died, this new reaction might have been much more violent.

About 1920, too, a new factor began to make itself felt in native Samoan politics. Hitherto self-rule had been conceived in terms of restoring the ancient political institutions, including the kingship. Now, by way of white and part-Samoan sympathizers with the native, and through the influence of travel and education on a handful of Samoan leaders, the idea of self-rule as conceived in Western countries began to filter into the native mind. As elsewhere in the post-war era, the catch-words of democracy, freedom, autonomy, and rights of a weaker people were sounded in native councils. It is necessary, however, to see this movement in Samoa in its true perspective. No two more contrasting systems could be found than a Western democracy and the Samoan socio-political organization, with its traditional hierarchy of chief and orator control, its submergence of the individual in family and community groups, and its lack of effective unity beyond the kin and the village. The new ideas, therefore, while influencing the situation, tend to remain purely verbal, indeed almost mystical and esoteric, and are expressed by only a small group. This is equally true in American Samoa where, as will be seen, such ideas have also filtered in.

After 1923 the New Zealand authorities launched an extensive experiment in allowing greater native autonomy. The members of the central council<sup>25</sup> were consulted on all native matters, and were appointed government agents for district administration. District councils and village committees, based on local native institutions, were formed under official supervision. At the same time an elaborate set of regulations and reforms already mentioned, designed to modify community life, land tenure, and other vital matters, was put into effect for the purpose of increasing the health and prosperity of the people. The new native organization was used to enforce these changes.

Under the earlier system, the plan of having native officials fitted quite well into the Samoan polity. The local leaders nominated to the positions<sup>26</sup> gained enhanced

24. Two petitions to the British throne are found in *The New Zealand Samoa Guardian*, October 10, 17, 1929; cf. also *Report of Visit by the Minister of External Affairs, 1922*, cited.

25. The *Fono a Faipule*, created as an advisory body by the Germans in 1905.

26. Usually the community or district would be asked to nominate a person to occupy each official post, and he would be formally appointed. Where such individuals were considered undesirable or, as was more usual, where agreement could not be reached, the appointment would be made directly. This is also the practice in American Samoa.

prestige and financial benefit. Under the reorganized system, however, the native official had powers and responsibilities suddenly thrust upon him for which he had no adequate training. Government proposals were accepted by members of the central council who did not understand their real import. The local officials were given authority which was abused in some cases, and were made the instruments for applying government schemes that brought them into direct conflict with the conservatives of their communities, especially with the orators, for the status of the latter was threatened by a number of the new measures. Samoan districts and communities began to stir once more with discontent and intrigue. This was especially true in areas where the old native leadership had centered, notably in the strongholds of the Tupua family, for New Zealand tended to follow the earlier British policy of considering the Malietoa paramount. All the discontented elements created by the change in native life crystallized in a movement of opposition to native officials and government schemes, and the *Mau* of Western Samoa came into existence.

A study of the *Mau* organization reveals it as essentially an indigenous growth. It follows in large measure the old pattern of *Tumua* and *Pule*, and has had village councils, district councils, and a central council akin to ancient Samoan institutions. The orators have had a dominant part in the movement. It can thus be easily understood why the *Mau* took form so rapidly. Districts of traditionally lesser importance in the old Samoa followed the lead of the traditionally superior districts; kin groups joined together; high chiefs and orators took their lesser fellows with them; and the mass of the people, men, women and children, took their lead from the heads of families. The organizers had only to win a few key people to enlist everyone in the movement except those under the influence of chiefs and orators in the government service.

Yet the *Mau* did not follow entirely along indigenous lines. A number of Samoan leaders who figured in the traditional roster of *Tumua* and *Pule* have remained aloof from the movement—nearly all government officials. Outstanding among these are two highest chiefs, Malietoa Tanumafili and Mataafa. The principal *Mau* leadership has been provided by the Tupua family. Finally, the *Mau* incorporated certain aspects of Western political and judicial structure into the special government which it set up in 1927-1929, including the use of an office building, a court of justice, and a police force. Since 1930, however, meetings of the *Mau* councils have been banned, so that the organ-

ization has had to operate in secret. Except for demonstrations, cricket matches, and other semi-political activities, the *Mau* movement has become passive and mystical.<sup>27</sup>

#### UNITED STATES RULE

In American Samoa native political history has been somewhat different. Under the old policy Tutuila was relatively unimportant. In establishing a system of native administration, the naval authorities were able to place the few leading chiefs and orators in paid official posts—a policy which has been followed ever since. In 1920 these officials took part in the *Mau* movement, but later reaffirmed their loyalty. The *Mau* of American Samoa, therefore, has been led by chiefs and orators of lower rank. Its prestige and influence among the natives is correspondingly less. Like the *Mau* in the neighboring territory, its organization has followed Samoan lines, with local councils and a central council, but with such modern innovations as the use of a special clubhouse.<sup>28</sup>

The *Mau* has so far obtained little foothold in Manu'a. These three islands, traditionally holding aloof from general Samoan politics, had in old days a ceremonial head known as the Tuimanu'a. This godlike individual had no peers in Samoa other than perhaps the holders of the two or three highest titles in Upolu. Manu'a, however, had its own troubles. Besides rivalries and miniature wars between communities and kin groups on the three islands, there were disputes concerning succession to the Tuimanu'a title, which became especially serious in 1909. The naval Governor took the opportunity to obtain an agreement among the family factions that the position should fall into abeyance. Authority in the islands was put into the hands of a native leader of next highest rank, who became a paid "district governor." The latter died in 1924, and agitation began again for restoration of the Tuimanu'a title. At the time of the Commission's visit in 1930 this demand was more important for the Manu'ans than any desire to change from naval to civil rule.<sup>29</sup> The authorities, however, have consistently refused to meet such requests fearing, not without reason, that peace and order would be seriously endangered by revival of the old polity.

On the whole the native socio-political system in the American islands has shown itself more adaptable to Western forms than that in Western Samoa. The traditional leadership is more defined, hence more easily utilized. Where, for instance, a Tutuila district will have one outstanding chief or orator who

27. Keesing, *Modern Samoa*, cited, pp. 176-91, etc.

28. *American Samoa, Hearings . . . 1930*, cited, index "Mau."

29. *Idem*, index "Tuimanu'a." It is of interest to note that the authority of the Tuimanu'a is specifically upheld in the American Samoa code, which has never been revoked. *Codification of the Regulations and Orders*, cited, p. 2.

is obviously the person to act as district governor, county chief, or native judge, an Upolu district may have ten to every one such position available. True, the latter situation, by giving a choice, may make for more efficient administration. In American Samoa the ranking person has of necessity to be elevated, regardless of his character and ability; to do otherwise would cause disorder and make administration still less efficient. It is quite out of the question as yet in Samoa to place personal ability above traditional rank. Nevertheless, intrigue that involves the government is thus minimized in American Samoa. Then, too, the small size of the territory, and the completeness of domination by the naval authorities made possible by the peculiar status of the islands, have allowed a more thorough, if exceedingly benevolent, control.

The 1930 Commission, in recommending a civil form of government, made concrete proposals that would throw greater responsibility into the hands of Samoan leaders. The present central advisory council or *Fono*<sup>30</sup> was to be reorganized so as to exercise legislative powers within certain limits. The Governor, now its chairman, was to be excluded from its meetings and to have only a veto power over its decisions; an appeal could be made from such veto to the President.

To anyone familiar with Samoans as native officials and advisers, a change of this kind would indeed be revolutionary. However capable Samoan leaders may be of conducting traditional Samoan affairs, they have so far had little opportunity to gain competence in, or even much comprehension of, the processes of modern government. The Samoans and indeed most part-Samoans, whether they realize it or not, are out of their depth when detailed matters of administration and legislation arise. Without radical alteration of Samoan socio-political organization, which is impossible at the present stage, such conditions as democratic election, one man one vote, majority voting, free speech, and exclusion of personal interest are unobtainable. The minutes of past *Fono* meetings show numbers of *remitis* from the districts asking that this or that form of taxation be lowered or abolished, while at the same time requesting increased appropriations for local public works, higher pay, leave on full pay, even pensions for native officials, and reduction in the salaries of white officials—samples of irresponsible proposals that will come before the new *Fono*. The person most in a position to give advice, the Governor, is excluded from its deliberations, and so must exercise his influence on

legislation by indirect means.<sup>31</sup> It would seem inevitable that from the first meeting a Samoan legislature will pass a number of measures requiring the Governor's veto. If his explanations are unsatisfactory, these will then be referred to the President. Even though the official veto is upheld, the foundation of conflict and unpopularity for the Governor will have been laid. Those who know Samoa may well anticipate that an opposition party will develop, and petitions will come to the United States for a change in governors.

The experience of New Zealand has demonstrated only too clearly the dangers of rapidly superimposing an alien form and philosophy of government on the Samoan polity. There is some justification for the view that a benevolent autocracy such as that exercised by the Navy is more suited to Polynesian ideas and institutions than the democratic system. Grievance against the naval rule may have reached a point where, because of opposition of many Samoans and part-Samoans in Tutuila, a transfer to a civil administration is desirable. Yet any move to place increasing responsibility in Samoan hands will have to be made with caution and with the fullest understanding of native polity and mentality.<sup>32</sup>

Possibly more success for the *Fono* than is here pictured might be achieved, since the Commission proposed to give full political rights as "American Samoans" to part-Samoans. Certain prominent part-Samoans might be selected as district representatives, and so provide a steady influence. Nevertheless, it is at least doubtful if such rule by a part-Samoan minority would be wise—whether domination by the local mixed bloods would be an improvement on domination by disinterested whites. It is also problematic whether the Samoan people would consent to such a policy.

#### PROBLEMS OF NON-NATIVES

This leads from matters directly concerned with the native Samoans to those involving the non-native community: white residents on the islands and part-Samoans. In the eyes of many officials and others these latter groups have been primarily responsible for the disturbed conditions of modern days.

<sup>31</sup>. The writer pointed out to certain leading Samoans and part-Samoans the implications of this exclusion of the Governor, and they all expressed surprise that such a clause existed in the act as drafted. One high chief remarked: "Of course, if we can't agree, or don't understand something, we shall call the Governor in to help us." Cf. Keesing, *Modern Samoa*, cited, for a fuller critique of the Commission's proposals.

<sup>32</sup>. Official and unofficial observers in Samoa have been impressed by the dignity, courtesy and competence of Samoan leaders and councils in their native setting. Miss Mead, in her monograph, *Social Organization of Manua*, has given a valuable exposition of the old political forms in a part of the territory (B. P. Bishop Museum Bulletin, Honolulu, 1930). Similar intensive studies should be made for the districts of Tutuila, and the whole supplemented by a detailed survey of the changes in recent times, including the use of Samoans in the government system.

<sup>30</sup>. This council consists of the nineteen highest native officials, together with thirty other delegates nominated by district councils. It meets annually to consider business brought to the notice of the districts by the Governor in advance, or coming as voluntary *remitis* from the districts.

The average white man living in such frontier places as Samoa has social and psychological characteristics that distinguish him from his stay-at-home fellows. To begin with he is usually an exceptional person to have been drawn to so remote a place. While this is by no means true in every instance, he tends in the course of the island life to have his interests and ambitions narrowed down to what an outsider would think a petty round; he often marries into part-native or native families; the tropical climate frequently affects his temper and he may suffer from a sense of inferiority or frustration; social outlets for his energy are limited. Gossip and "beach politics" assume abnormal importance. There is little discipline of civic responsibility allowed by the system of dependency government under which he lives. Having a permanent stake in the country, whether as trader, planter or minor government employee, he naturally feels himself in a better position to know what should be done as regards local, especially native affairs, than officials who come from the governing country for a temporary stay; he is therefore usually an inveterate critic.

The official, on his side, tends to consider the local white resident either degenerate or dangerous, as having ties that prevent him from being disinterested. Any individual who criticizes official policies is immediately under suspicion of being a "self-seeking agitator." The trader or business man is liable to be regarded as an exploiter of the government's native wards.

This basic conflict between the resident white population and the authorities in Samoa goes far back into the international régime. Since 1900 the emotion generated among such residents has attached itself to a number of specific grievances which are found to be much the same in the records of the German, American and New Zealand régimes. They may be summarized as (1) "over-government"—too many officials, too much show, inefficiency; (2) "financial extravagance"—excessive expenditure, unjust taxation, high cost of importing officials instead of using local men; (3) "tyranny and domination"—taxation without fair representation, limiting the political rights of non-native residents, no trial by jury, denial of free speech, prohibition of liquor, and the like; (4) "foolish native policies"—the government doesn't know the native mind and customs, too much is done for the native; (5) "neglect of the non-native residents"—the government helps only its favorites (i.e. those it considers competent), private enterprise is victimized, especially through government competition, the local man is discriminated against. Much of what is thus complained about seems inherent in all dependency gov-

ernment, especially as regards the limitations placed on any non-natives who choose to take up residence in such areas; the pattern of grievance is therefore fairly typical of dependent territories. Yet, no administration being perfect, many mistakes have been and are made in both Samoas that give the critics a certain justification for their statements.<sup>33</sup>

The time is not so distant when every native Samoan will have in his veins at least some small fraction of white or Chinese blood, or both. In the early years a considerable mixing took place with whites. While this process is not so marked today due to changing social conditions, the white strain is still spreading, particularly through the unions of natives with part-natives. Chinese blood also continues to filter in, mainly in Western Samoa, while Melanesian, and even some Negro and Japanese, intermixture is taking place.

After 1900 the Germans tried to deal with the miscegenation problem by giving all legitimate and certain judicially legitimized mixed bloods the status of whites, and leaving the rest to be welded into the native Samoan population. New Zealand made no essential alteration in the German laws.<sup>34</sup> Today, therefore, about 2,500 part-Samoans are counted as non-natives or "Europeans" along with the white residents, while a much larger, although indeterminate, number are considered as "Samoan." European affairs are kept strictly apart from native affairs, so that the former group are politically and legally cut off from participation in the native system of life. By precedent rather than by law exactly the same situation has developed in American Samoa. Both the mandatory and the naval authorities have more or less openly taken the stand that the person of mixed descent may have a contaminating and politically dangerous influence upon the native Samoan, is likely to exploit him, and hence must be kept apart.

But the rapidly increasing group of European mixed bloods find it more and more difficult to attain social and economic stability within the non-native group. White women are coming in greater numbers to the islands, and the part-Samoans are being rejected from a white society that hitherto did not seriously discriminate against them. Already the small number of business and trade openings available for them around the centers, Apia and Pago Pago, are filled, and since they are prohibited, as Europeans, from

33. The criticisms of German rule are found at many points in the *Samoanische Zeitung*, such as June 27, 1903 and February 6, 1904; also in a petition of residents found in *Visit by the Minister of External Affairs, 1927*, cited, pp. 44-46; those of New Zealand rule in citations in footnotes 12, 13, 14, 15; those of navy rule in American Samoa in the *Commission Hearings*, and in numbers of newspaper reports, letters, etc.

34. These are set out in Keesing, *Modern Samoa*, cited, chap. XI, where the problems associated with miscegenation in Samoa are discussed in detail.

acquiring native land, their economic position is already difficult. In Western Samoa "half-castes" are considered undesirable for government posts. Every year sees more mixed children coming from the schools to magnify the problem.

The native Samoans, for their part, have shown little or no antipathy to those of mixed blood except in so far as individual Samoans have reflected the attitude of the whites. Those part-Samoans, therefore, who do not become more or less disgruntled hangers-on on the fringes of white society turn for satisfaction to their native side. They attach themselves informally to their Samoan relationship group or else marry into a native community. This is not so with all mixed bloods. There is today an established group, children of early white settlers, who have inherited their fathers' names and business associations and who by ability and education have won for themselves an impregnable place in the non-native community. They form perhaps the most powerful influence in Samoa today: the Nelson and Ripley families are examples. But their achievements were made possible by conditions now largely passing or past, and the prospect for the oncoming generations of part-Samoans is indeed dark. A number of the established mixed families have been closely associated with the grievances described as characteristic of the resident white community. The special problem of the part-Samoan thus outlined, however, is potentially far more serious than anything Samoa has yet faced, unless some remedy is found.

Unfortunately for the government officials and policies, the resident whites and part-Samoans exercise a profound and, in many places, a dominating influence over the native mind. Marital, business, social and linguistic affiliations place them in a position to mold Samoan opinion to a degree that can hardly be attained by officialdom. In an important sense the ability to administer territories such as Western or American Samoa depends on the success of the authorities in enlisting the most influential members of these groups on their side.

The Germans recognized this clearly. Yet there was always a dissatisfied group who aired their grievances both in Samoa and in the home papers. The German authorities attributed the two outbreaks of their régime directly to secret intrigues and propaganda by such individuals.<sup>35</sup> The demands of residents for a greater say in affairs had reached a point by 1914 where some move had to be made. But it fell to the lot of New Zealand to experiment. When civil government was established in 1920 an informal advisory

council maintained by the Germans was reconstituted as a legislative council with a majority of officials and a nominated minority of citizens. In 1923, in consequence of further requests from the residents, periodic elections of the unofficial minority by citizens of a prescribed legal and financial status were introduced. For a time this change seemed to satisfy local aspirations. But in 1926 demands for still greater control emerged along with other grievances.

On the whole, however, New Zealand has been at no great pains to enlist the support of the non-native community. From the first it was declared that native Samoan interests were to be paramount, and that whites and part-Samoans must play second fiddle. Local criticisms were more or less brushed aside as "beach talk," and many measures were taken which residents considered threatening to their rights and interests. The many positive benefits derived from mandatory rule were thus more than neutralized. In spite, too, of the artificial dichotomy between non-native and native caused by the adoption of the German system of political and legal classification, the resulting discontent was inevitably reflected in the native community. Both in 1920-1922 and 1926-1927 the authorities openly accused local whites and part-Samoans of engineering the native disaffection as a means of furthering personal ambitions and interests.

#### NON-NATIVE GRIEVANCES

It has always been easy for a non-native resident to proceed from the rôle of critic to that of a champion of native rights. This method, popular in the international days, was confined to secret activities between 1900 and 1926 because of the official ban. The conferences, meetings and reports of 1926, when Samoans were drawn in overtly by government critics to side with them against the authorities gave the residents an opportunity to express native grievances as complementing their own. This was to them a perfectly justifiable move. The *Mau* or "Opinion" that emerged in 1927 was largely expressed and to some extent organized by non-native critics. The *Mau* leaders and movement were more or less inarticulate except as policies, petitions and criticisms were formulated by such people, whose directions were followed with an almost mystical fervor. This has been one of the circumstances which has made it difficult for the authorities to grapple with the *Mau*. With the years, the original non-native grievances have tended to pass into the background, and critics have devoted themselves to championing the native. By this policy they have aroused considerable sympathy in New Zealand and elsewhere, while the mandatory's good name has correspondingly suffered.

<sup>35.</sup> *Samoanische Zeitung*, May 15, 1909, gives one of a number of statements by the Governor to this effect.

In American Samoa the naval authorities have consistently attributed their troubles, both in the first years and since 1920, to open or secret influence by white and part-Samoan "agitators" in and outside the territory.<sup>36</sup> Here, too, the *Mau* movement drew grievances, catch-words and demands mainly from non-native sources. But the more definite nature of the main objectives—a desire for status within the American empire, and "getting rid of the Navy"—has

made the *Mau* movement appear perhaps more intelligent, and made it more easy to handle successfully than that in the neighboring territory. Furthermore, the number of white residents and of part-Samoans treated as whites in American Samoa is only a fraction of that in Western Samoa, so that the conflict and criticisms have not been nearly so acute, nor have they come so much into the open.<sup>37</sup>

### CONCLUSION

On the basis of this brief survey, the troubled history of Samoa is seen as partly due to the changing of Samoan life with its resultant cultural-psychological difficulties, partly to the problems associated with the settlement of whites in the territory and the rise of a mixed population. The modern *Mau* movements are in one respect a retreat from the stress of adjustment to the new order, in another the first stirrings of a new cultural nationalism that may be expected to develop in the future. Aroused and formulated chiefly by whites and part-Samoans, they are nevertheless essentially indigenous, rooted in Polynesian soil.

The outstanding conclusion from this study of Samoa's past and present is that the factors analyzed are likely to continue in operation for many years to come. The prospects of a peaceful Samoa and of an end to *Mau* movements are exceedingly doubtful. The scars of the past will mark the oncoming generations, especially in the New Zealand portion of the islands where from ancient times native politics have been most active, and where the bulk of the non-native population is concentrated.

The great need in both territories is for careful study of present native life and thought, so that the authorities can be more certain of the wisdom of their policies. Dependency government today requires that administrators be ethnologists and psychologists as well as executives. Native education requires special attention, so that the Samoan youth shall be neither too hastily maladjusted nor too much retarded.<sup>38</sup> To train the Samoan leader in the arts of government along modern lines, and adapt native political institutions so as to give greater autonomy without endangering the public order are also tasks that require more study than they have received. The *Mau* movements

particularly are worth close analysis. In Western Samoa the authorities will have to enlist more thoroughly the sympathy of non-native residents so as to minimize the strains inherent in a dependency system, utilizing their knowledge and influence rather than adopting a suspicious and condemnatory manner. In the long run, however, dealings with the non-native community will be concerned less with the white residents than with part-natives. The number of whites is already markedly diminishing in Samoa, due to the decline of the plantation system in the post-war period and to the rise of educated part-Samoans and Samoans capable of conducting local business and trade enterprises.<sup>39</sup> The most acute problem of all, common to both Samoas, is to find a satisfactory place for the part-Samoan. The present policy of segregating the mixed population from the native appears impracticable and dangerous, especially in Western Samoa where it is legally defined. Elsewhere, as in the Philippines and among the American Indians and the New Zealand Maori, the mixed population has provided the natural leadership for a group in transition. While it may be unwise to throw the present European mixed groups suddenly into the same classification as the Samoans without safeguards to prevent exploitation, political interference and the accumulation of land by the former,<sup>40</sup> at least the way should be opened for those part-Samoans who find their arbitrarily acquired European status unsatisfactory to ally themselves fully with their native relatives.

38. In 1931 a memorial fund known as the Frederick Duclos Barstow Foundation was established privately for educational purposes in American Samoa, to be managed by trustees in Hawaii. In 1932 a commission visited the islands, and with the cooperation of the naval authorities the school system is being reorganized. The earlier policy of educating the Samoan along predominantly Western lines is replaced by a system akin to that worked out in Western Samoa where government schooling is integrated with elementary mission schooling in the villages to give an education closely related to local Samoan conditions and opportunities. Keesing, *Modern Samoa*, cited, chap. X.

39. *Annual Reports on Administration*, presented by New Zealand to the Mandates Commission; *Annual Reports on Trade, Commerce and Shipping, Western Samoa*; Keesing, *Modern Samoa*, cited, chap. V, VI.

40. This is one of the proposals made by the 1930 Commission in its *Report*. If it is carried out, the authorities will need to watch to see that no abuses occur, perhaps passing special legislation on certain matters such as landholding. In Western Samoa such a sudden change would be impossible, as it would be firmly opposed by the established group of part-Samoans.

36. From 1900-1904 certain whites in American Samoa fo-mented opposition to the naval authorities, culminating in a visit by one of their number to Washington. A caption, "Samoan Natives are Sick of the Rule of the Navy," appeared in a San Francisco paper in the latter year: *Samoanische Zeitung*, August 29, October 26, 1901, etc.; *San Francisco Examiner*, January 27, 1903, December 18, 1904.

37. This last fact should be borne in mind by anyone reading the Commission *Hearings* of 1930. A person on the "inside" realizes that much of what was overtly Samoan evidence was really inspired by people who did not face the commissioners directly—part-Samoans, missionaries, and others.















